

AGENDA ITEM 10: Consider Commission position on AB 1713 (Eggman: public vote on Delta tunnels)

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Requested Action: Consider Commission position on AB 1713 (Eggman: public vote on Delta tunnels)

Background: Assembly Bill 1713 by Assemblymember (and former Commission member) Susan Eggman would prohibit the construction of the proposed Delta tunnels unless expressly authorized by an initiative voted on by the voters of California on or after January 1, 2017. The bill would also require the Legislative Analyst’s Office to complete a prescribed economic feasibility analysis prior to a vote authorizing the construction of the Delta tunnels. The bill has been co-sponsored by many members of the Delta-region legislative delegation, is supported by many Delta interests and is opposed by water export interests.

AB 1713 was heard in the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee on April 20 and passed the Committee on an 8-4 vote. It is now before the Assembly Appropriations Committee where it has been placed on the suspense file (the bill has an estimated fiscal impact of \$220,000 related to the costs of placing a measure on the ballot).

The following is from the Assembly Appropriations Committee bill analysis:

“This bill is supported by environmental groups, Delta counties and other Delta interests who argue that the permitting process for a major infrastructure project should be transparent and affirmatively approved by those who would be directly assessed for its high cost and those who would be forced to live with its numerous adverse impacts. This bill is opposed by Delta exporters, Central Valley and Southern California counties, and numerous unions and chambers of commerce. Opponents argue that this bill will cause unnecessary delays and bureaucracy, jeopardizing the only viable solution available to secure water supplies for 2/3 of the state while improving the health of the Delta. Opponents are fundamentally opposed to asking voters to approve the construction of infrastructure projects, particularly those that are not funded by taxpayers.”

Proposed Action: The Commission does not often take action on proposed legislation, but most recently provided a support letter on SB 554 (Sen. Wolk bill on Delta subventions program) based on clear direction in Vision 2030 (Commission strategic plan). The Commission has taken positions related to the proposed Delta tunnels (first as BDCP and most recently as CA WaterFix), but has never weighed in on the question of taking the approval of the Delta tunnels to a public vote. The Commission might want to consider an expression of support on AB 1713.